A MOTHER'S VOICE FROM THE TRENCHES

(Mrs. Margaret M. Crumpecker, in Mothers' Magazine.)

Past miseries fly so rapidly from our recollection, and the events of our present terrible war have followed each other with such great rapidity, that its earlier incidents, Belgium's destruction by the Huns, and the utter disregard the Germans have for the secredness of life, liberty, and even for God, are likely to be forgotten unless we realize the facts in the case.

In this great war which was made-in-Germany, I knew that the work of American mothers would cover an enormous field. This is also our war, and we must stand with the men in spirit and in service. When I first decided to serve my country and my sex, after war began, Iknew that I should first go to the front and see and hear what was taking place. I have been there, I have seen and heard many things which no words or photographs could describe. But I hope by means of what I say to give you a clearer idea of what is taking place over there. I want to aid in wiping out forever the strange queries I heard so often before I had been on the battle-filds, such as, "Do you believe the Germans are actually committing all the crimes laid to them in Belgium? Have you been there and seen with your own eyes? Why should they ruthlessly slay innocent women and children?"

Most of these questions came before we had many real photographs of their unthinkable atrocities. These defilers of civilization had seen to it that no photographs were taken out of the land, and that the real existing conditions were kept from other countries, especially America. Now the conditions are known, and especially what the women and children are doing and suffering.

I studied all the branches of service, and especially the part that the women are playing. The 75 meter shell, for instance, that the French are using passes through the hands of 246 women before it is ready for service. There are three eight-hour shifts at the munition factories; and the exactness with which each detail of the work on a shell is done is beyond comprehension. I watched several women whose sole duty it was to take electric lights and carefully examine the inside of a big shell to see that not a speck of picric acid was lodged there. The tiniest flaw will oftentimes cause the shell to burst and kill numbers of the men operating the machines. At the beginning of the war many lives were lost by the carelessness of workers.

The thing that impressed me most at the munition factories was the sight of women removing the immense shells from the boiling pots of metal. By means of a long prong, resembling an ice prong, one shell at a time was dipped up carefully and laid about six feet away to cool. Each shift averaged about 1000 shells per day, thus making 3000 per day for the entire factory. There were many factories run entirely by women. I was the second woman permitted to visit the factories. The interesting life there, with its secrecy, myriads of wonders and new discoveries in the art of making munitions, would do justice to a Jules Verne novel.

One of the most interesting experiences I had was while in an officer's dug-out, just behind the back trenches, during a lull in the battle of the Marne. The officer, who was conducting our party, told me to look up. I did so, and strangely enough I saw green foliage and beautiful flowers above me. Between steel girders I could see the flowers. At first I almost doubted my senses ,but the officer told me were were undr a greenhouse.

Later, as we entered the greenhouse, several shells burst within a few hundred yards of us. We could see hundreds of civilians in the distance, mostly old women and young children, hurrying, helter-skelter, to conceal themselves behind shelter. Most of them had ventured out to gather bits of green growing things and pick up sticks of firewood to use for cooking.

One of the French officers showed us the blue prints of the trenches, which he explained in detail, pointing out a circuitous route before me. We went on for several kilos and came to a very peculiar underground tunnel through which we practically crawled for some distance. Finally, he told me look up, and away above us I saw a man, so high up that he appeared no larger than a doll, sitting in a swing. The officer pressed a button and signaled for him to come down. He did so by climbing down improvised steps made in the stone, and when he reached us the officer asked me to climb up and look out. I did so, and could distinctly see the Germans in their trenches very peacefully having a game of cards. Behind them appeared to be unending miles of German soldiers and war paraphernalia. Our officers told me that we were in a little French cemetery, and were inside a huge hollow stone monument. The swing was suspended from the top and the tiny opening through which I looked was a letter in the epitaph. This was the station for a "lookout man" and he was in touch with a thousand telegraph wires. Occasionally we exchanged frivolous remarks in a half-whisper, not because we felt happy, but because we had to keep up our courage.

I had a long talk with an old woman, and her story made our blood run cold. She said that when the Germans entered the village, after a battle with the French troops who were still near by, infuriated because of the resistance offered to their advance, they sought revenge on the women and children. Hundreds of men and young boys were lined up outside the church to be shot. Rapid-fire guns were used, and many fell only wounded. These, with heaps of their dead comrades, were ordered buried by the Germans, although some of them were mercifully stabbed to death. One man, who was about to be thrown into the trenches by his own wife, who was commanded to bury him, raised his hand in pleading, but the German doctor examined him and ordered him buried with the rest.

Late one afternoon, as we were walking near the village of Garcy, it began to rain heavily. There seemed to be no habitation near, except a small half-demolished hut, not much larger than two piano-cases. I ran toward it, and in my haste to shelter myself from the rain I stumbled over an object crawling on the ground near the entrance to the shanty. It was an aged Belgian woman, clothed in rags. On questioning her I found she was trying to gather a few bits of wild green plants that grew on the spot. In her trembling and ghostly hands she held a piece of broken saucer with which she was attempting to catch some drinking water which she would use with the bits of green plant in making a little soup for her daughter, as she had nothing else to give her, and she was ill. We entered the hut and found that the sole inmates were this aged woman and her daughter. The latter had within the past week's time brought into the world her first child. She had received no medical assistance, had no bed, except a little pile of dried grass, no clean linens, no friend but this aged mother, who was past eighty and herself an invalid. The girl's husband, so the old woman told me, had been shot by the Germans, but she added with a bit of pride, "I buried him myself, and he was wrapped in a nice clean sheet." I called the attention of the Red Cross workers to her case, and she was immediately cared for and sent to a hospital.

I talked with another old woman at Barcy, who had been through the battle of the Marne. She said that she had fled before the Germans and had managed to escape them; and that after many privations had managed to return to her home to find it in absolute ruins. "But," she added, "it was a great joy to feel that I was near the spot where my children had played, and where the Germans could not thrive!"

"You know," she said in French, "a mother is always a mother, and when great sorrow has once come into a mother's life and she has lost her own children she immediately becomes the mother of all children who need her care, and so I am the mother of all wounded soldiers whom I find. You ought to see," she added with pride, "my boys whom I have nursed to health over there," and she pointed toward Paris as an aged prophet might have pointed toward Jerusalem.

I asked her if she had any children of her own. "I had four," she answered. "Two sons, who were killed in the battle of the Marne; and two young daughters, aged eight and twelve, who the Germans, after tying me, horribly treated in my presence. The last I saw of them was as they were being driven away in a wagon. I pray to God that they are dead. Two of my neighbors' boys were nailed upside down to a barn because they were found playing with a Belgian flag. They were aged only five and seven."

It was not unusual to see young women who had escaped their tormentors, hopelessly insane, wandering over these desolate regions talking to themselves. At one place, quite near the front, we found six little girls wandering around together with tiny paper bags which they clung to. Where they came from no one knew. Their names had been hastily worked in red thread on their little sleeves; and they had in the little bags their few small belongings. They all wept and clung to any woman who would notice them.

I asked one woman whom I knew had given four sons to the war, each of whom had been killed at the battle of the Marne, how she felt about her part of the sacrifice. She looked at me with astonishment and horror in her eyes as she replied in French: "I am fortunate; any woman knows that she is fortunate to be able to aid in destroying the vandals that have ravished and pillaged our free country. See! See!"—and she pointed toward a little girl with hands cut off!

That mother is only one in thousands who have sacrificed all. They are found throughout France and Belgium. And never have I found one that has complained of her sacrifice. They have seen, they know, that Liberty is priceless. And while I am assured that every American mother is trying to do her best, I know that not until the war is actually brought to our own shores will we fully realize the value of sacrifice, and the imperative need for each of us to do our bit now. This is the time when American womanhood must also be ready to die, if need be, for our liberty. Let us be more ready and willing to permit and help our boys to go—for America is in the war, and we must win.

ONE STORY OF GERMAN CRUELTY

The Kemp, Texas, News says:

"A young lady living in an East Texas town not more than 125 miles from Kemp received a letter some days ago from her sweetheart, who is a prisoner in Germany. In the letter he stated that he was getting all he wanted to eat and wear and that the Germans were as kind to him as he could ask for. He also said he was sending her his watch as a keepsake, for he might never see her again. Later, she got the watch and when she went to wind it, it would not wind. She carried it to a jeweler and down in the works the man had a note on a little scrap of paper in which he stated all he said in the letter was a lie, that his nose and ears had been cut off by the Germans, and that he would never see her again, for he was a sight that would throw the man with the strongest stomach into a vomiting fit. The girl who received this letter lives at Nacogdoches and there are people in Kemp who know her and know the story to be a true one."

SPEND PLEASANT AFTERNOON

"Abie" Bales was the host at an afternoon party given at Brundage's Ice Cream Parlor last Tuesday afternoon. Light refreshments were served to the following guests: Misses Lodema Cook, Florence St. Charles, Dorothy Smith and Mrs. R. A. Robinson.

Mrs. Robinson wa scompelled to act as host for Mr. Bales at the last moment, however, as he was unable to be present .

FIRST GAS MASKS

The use of gas in warfare dates back to about 400 B. C. The Spartans saturated wood with pitch and sulphur and burned it under the walls of cities which they were attacking. For several centuries gas has not been used in warfare, and The Hague convention definitely ruled against it. However, on April 22, 1915, the Germans liberated great clouds of gas against Canadian troops near Ypres. Terrible destruction and demoralization resulted from the first gas attack and within a week England was making plans for gas warfare against the Germans.

Soon after the first German gas attack English and French women sent to the front hundreds of thousands of home-made gas masks. For the most part they were merely bandages impregnated with chemicals to wrap around the mouth and nose. These emergency masks saved many lives, but afforded only limited protection.

SHEEP SHEARING IN FULL BLAST

The Hudspeth Sheep company has 8000 sheep at its pens near McConnico and shearing is in full operation. Machines are being used and the shearers are making big money. Wool is the highest ever known and the fleeces are heavy. Many other sheep men are bringing in their flocks for shearing, Johns and Trenbath having several thousand head at Munds, where shearing is in progress.

Weeds and grass are coming up strong and the whole country will soon be in shape to care for an immense number of sheep.

BOB WHITE QUAIL TO BE PROPAGATED IN ARIZONA

G. M. Willard, game warden of Arizona, has perfected a plan for the propagation of the bob white in this state. He has just arranged with the game warden of Oklahoma for the exchange of a number of the gamble quail, common here, for a number of the bob white quail, which are plentiful in Oklahoma and other middle western states. The exchange is made on the basis of one bob white for two gamble quail, and Mr. Willard has arranged for the trapping of fifteen dozen of the latter. The birds will be delivered to Mr. Willard at a cost of $4 per dozen by the trappers, while these birds are quoted at $22.

The bob whites are to come from Oklahoma City and will be liberated near Yuma, Sucson, Buckeye, the Tonto Basin and south of Phoenix. They will not reach Arizona before fall.—Copper Era.

ARIZONA'S ANTLERED ONES INCREASED IN NUMBER

G. M. Willard, state game warden, has closed a contract by wire with Henry Anderson of Gardiner, Wyoming, whereby the latter is to capture and load for shipment to Arizona two carloads of elk. These elk will be liberated in the Mount Graham and the Blue Range state game preserves and will supplement the elk brought to this state five years ago and which are now estimated to number 200 head.

SHE WASN'T AN ESKIMO

A bright little girl in Miss Alberta Schwabe's room in the city schools sent the following "pome" to the Sun:

The Eskimo sleeps in his little bear skin
And keeps very warm, I am told.
Last night I slept in my little bare skin
And caught a h. o. a cold.
—Superior Sun.

CATHOLIC CHURCH

Sunday, March 3—Services at the Catholic church at 8:30 a. m.

Sunday school at 11 o'clock.

Monday evening at 7 there will be a meeting of the Ladies of the Altar Society at the priest house.

REV. ED. ALBOUY, Pastor.

ST. JOHN'S METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Sunday School .....10:00A. M.
Worship .. ..11:00 A. M.
Young Peoples Service .. .. 6:30 P. M.

Everybody invited.

THOMAS H. DODD, Pastor.

All cheese now in storage must be madketed before June 15, unleas special permission to hold is given by the food administration.